

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Legal Assistant

Class Code: 11205

A. Purpose

Provides legal assistance to an attorney to ensure an efficient delivery of legal services.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Legal Assistant relieves the attorney of routine, often time-consuming duties involved in legal matters, thereby enabling the attorney to utilize his/her legal expertise on the more complex aspects of a case. The duties of a legal assistant are professional and non-clerical in nature. The incumbent performs preparatory work such as researching, investigating details, and assembling data and information, and other work under the supervision of an attorney.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Provides legal assistance under the direct supervision and review of an attorney.
 - a. Conducts legal research.
 - b. Conducts investigations and statistical and documentary research.
 - c. Locates and interviews witnesses.
 - d. Reviews and summarizes legal documents such as depositions, witness statements, pre-trial discovery documents, and exhibits and evidence for hearings or trials.
 - e. Drafts legal documents, correspondence, and pleadings.
 - f. Attends depositions, court or administrative hearings, and trials.
2. Assists attorney in preparing for trials and/or legal hearings.
 - a. Organizes and indexes trial or hearing materials.
 - b. Drafts orders, subpoenas, motions, and briefs as directed.
 - c. Assembles and compiles charts, exhibits, and reports.
3. Conducts client interviews and maintains general contact with clients under the supervision of an attorney.
4. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

The incumbent typically does not supervise. The incumbent works under the direct supervision of an attorney.

E. Challenges:

Challenges include providing assistance regarding compliance with established legal standards and guidelines such as disclosing status as a legal assistant, preserving client confidence, and understanding the supervising attorney's code of professional responsibilities and guidelines to avoid violations or give the appearance of professional impropriety. The incumbent is further challenged to carry out the daily activities of the legal profession amid constantly changing laws.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include prioritizing work assigned by an attorney.

Decisions referred include legal advice, accepting legal cases, setting legal fees, performing legal services, or appearing in court without the supervision of an attorney.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with the clerk of courts and administrators to schedule court and hearings, and file orders and judgements; and weekly contact with attorneys, circuit court judges, and supreme court personnel regarding case resolution.

H. Working Conditions:

The incumbent works in a typical office environment.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- legal terminology;
- legal concepts and practices;
- legal research techniques and procedures;
- interviewing techniques and procedures;
- judicial processes.

Ability to:

- analyze facts, evidence, and precedents and arrive at a logical interpretation;
- review decisions and investigative reports in relation to prescribed laws and regulations;
- use discretion regarding confidential material and to understand the legal code of ethics;
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with coworkers and the public;
- prepare legal reports;
- communicate findings and information clearly and concisely.